

APPENDIX P

SCENERY MANAGEMENT AND VISUAL QUALITY

The Visual Management System (VMS) identifies standards for managing aesthetic values and scenic quality of forestlands. Visual management goals are to upgrade landscapes that do not meet the desired level of scenic quality and to improve landscapes that have potential for greater natural appearing variety. Within the VMS, five visual quality objectives (VQO) describe a degree of acceptable alteration of natural landscape. Presently, the assessment area is mapped to display those areas where visual quality is to be managed as: 1) Preservation (unaltered), 2) Retention (appears unaltered), 3) Partial Retention (Slightly altered), 4) Modification (moderately altered), or 5) Maximum Modification ((heavily altered).

During forest plan revision, the Scenery Management System (SMS) will replace the Visual Management System. Scenery integrity levels (SIL) instead of VQOs will be the frame of reference to describe the naturalness or visual resources of forestland. Scenic integrity levels are comparable to visual quality objectives in their reference to alterations in landscape. However, the SIL approach includes managing scenic resources to include ecological consequences. Scenic Integrity Level indicates the degree of intactness and wholeness of the landscape character where ecosystems provide the environmental context of scenery management. The assessment area has not yet been inventoried and mapped to display the SMS Scenery Integrity Levels.

The chart below illustrates the transition from VQOs to SILs

Visual Quality Objectives VMS	Degree of Landscape Alteration	Scenic Integrity Level SMS
Preservation	Unaltered Landscape	Very High
Retention	Appears Unaltered	High
Partial Retention	Slightly Altered	Moderate
Modification	Moderately Altered	Low
Maximum Modification	Heavily Altered	Very Low
None (not an objective)	Extremely altered	Unacceptably Low

Reference: *Landscape Aesthetics, A Handbook for Scenery Management*, Agriculture Handbook Number 701